

RESPONSIBILITY OF "DEATH SQUAD" RUN BY
BUSINESSMAN RICARDO SOL MESA AND NATIONAL
GUARD MAJOR DENIS MORAN FOR MURDERS OF
RODOLFO VIERA AND U.S. CITIZENS MICHAEL
HAMMER AND MARK PEARLMAN; USE OF THE
DEATH SQUAD TO CONDUCT BOMBINGS IN SAN
SALVADOR. (DOCUMENTARY: 1981).

A MID-LEVEL NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER

SAID ON 27 MAY 1981 THAT MORAN DIRECTED A "DEATH SQUAD" PAYROLLED BY SALVADORAN BUSINESSMAN RICARDO SOL MESA, AND THAT SOL MESA AND MORAN USED THIS DEATH SQUAD TO KILL RODOLFO VIERA, FORMER HEAD OF THE SALVADORAN AGRARIAN REFORM INSTITUTE (ISTA) AT THE SHERATON HOTEL IN SAN SALVADOR ON 4 JANUARY 1981. COMMENT: U.S. CITIZENS MIKE HAMMER AND MARK PEARLMAN OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD) WERE KILLED ALONG WITH VIERA BECAUSE THEY HAPPENED TO BE WITH VIERA AT THE TIME AND BECAUSE THEY SUPPORTED VIERA'S AGRARIAN REFORM ACTIVITIES. HAMMER AND PEARLMAN APPARENTLY WERE NOT TARGETS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.)

2. VIERA WAS A LONGSTANDING TARGET OF THE SOL MESA AND MORAN GROUP, AND THEY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF VIERA'S LENGTHY PRESENCE IN THE SHERATON HOTEL FOR DINNER ON 4 JANUARY TO ASSASSINATE HIM. THE ASSASSINATION WAS NOT PREPLANNED; THE DECISION TO MURDER VIERA WAS MADE ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT.

3. THE DEATH SQUAD DESCRIBED ABOVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF BANK BOMBINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN RECENT MONTHS IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF SAN SALVADOR, AS WELL AS FOR THE ASSASSINATIONS OF MANY INDIVIDUALS THOUGHT TO SUPPORT LEFTIST CAUSES. THE PAYROLL OF THE DEATH SQUAD IS ESTIMATED AT 20,000 COLONES MONTHLY (U.S. \$8,000), WITH MEMBERS NORMALLY PAID 100 COLONES DAILY (U.S. \$40) DURING THE PERIODS THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO WORK FOR THE SQUAD. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY STATED IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE MAJORITY IF NOT ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOL MESA AND MORAN DEATH SQUAD ARE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.)

4. THE SOL MESA AND MORAN DEATH SQUAD OPERATES ON ITS OWN BUT IT IS THOUGHT TO HAVE CONNECTIONS THROUGH FORMER ARMY CAPTAIN EDUARDO ALFONSO AVILA WITH ANOTHER RIGHTIST GROUP WHICH IS INVOLVED IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES.